



December 19, 2013

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means “God is with us.” (Mt 1:23)

The Catholic Peacebuilding Network wishes you a blessed Advent and a joyful Christmas! May we always remember that “God is with us.”

CPN PARTNERS

Pax Christi International Statement on Syria

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Book: *Constructing Immigrant “Illegality”: Critiques, Experiences, and Responses*

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Pax Christi International Statement on Syria

“Support a just, negotiated, political solution to the war in Syria,” says Pax Christi International in their statement released November 26. In this document the organization calls for the Syrian government not to use starvation as a weapon against their people; asks donors to increase their aid to the region; calls on countries around the globe to provide protection to Syrian refugees; and states that the international community, especially through the UN, should create an infrastructure for a negotiated peace process. They emphasize that the Syrian people should be the main actors in the peacebuilding process. They call on people to support the Geneva 2 peace conference in January, support humanitarian relief efforts, and pray for peace in Syria. Read the [full text here](#) (PDF).

A PEACEBUILDING CHURCH: NEWS

Church Confronts Crisis in the Central African Republic

The deepening crisis in the Central African Republic has left tens of thousands dead and displaced. The Church has called for international action to stop the violence as it has tried to protect civilians and provide urgent humanitarian aid, despite attacks on churches, schools and other Catholic institutions. After a meeting convened by Caritas Internationalis on December 4, Archbishop Dieudonné Nzapalainga of Bangui and Bishop Nestor Désiré Nongo Aziagbia of Bossangoa issued a [letter calling for reconciliation](#) (in French, PDF). In a moving appeal on December 10 in which he details the violence that has “plunged this suffering country into the depths of an abyss,” Bishop Nongo decries the tendency of some to see it as Christian-Muslim [conflict](#). [Read more](#) about the crisis in the Central African Republic and the work of Caritas.

Pope’s Message for the World Day of Peace

The Pope’s message for the January 1 World Day of Peace, entitled “Fraternity, the Foundation and Pathway to Peace,” was released this month. The Pope points to fraternity as a foundation and pathway to peace and a way to answer problems of poverty, war, crime, and environmental issues. “A lively awareness of our relatedness helps us to look upon and to treat each person as a true sister or brother; without fraternity it is impossible to build a just society and a solid and lasting peace.” Read the [full text here](#).

Honoring the Life of Nelson Mandela

Upon the death of Nelson Mandela, the Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference expressed their sadness at his passing and their thanksgiving for his life and his work, quoting Scripture: “Let us now sing the praises of famous men, great men in their generations... They ruled their governments wisely, were known for their valour. Their counsel displayed wisdom, they saw things from afar” (Sirach 44:1-3). They called on people to strive for the ideals which Nelson Mandela cherished: “freedom, equality, and democracy.” [Read more](#).

Ugandan Sister Honored for Work with LRA Victims

Sister Rosemary Nyirumbe, an educator from Uganda who works with women and girls who have suffered at the hands of the LRA, received an honorary doctorate degree from DePaul University (based in the United States) on December 7. Sister Nyirumbe heads the Santa Monica Center in Gulu, Uganda, which offers psychological support, literacy training, and vocational skills to women and girls. In her work for the center, she also travels around the world, raising awareness of ongoing violence in Uganda. Sister Nyirumbe was given this degree at a ceremony at Tangaza College in Nairobi, Kenya. [Read more.](#)

Colombia: Franciscan Project for Women Victimized by Violence

About 70% of women in Colombia suffer some form of violence in their lives. In observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25, the Spanish Catholic NGO Manos Unidas shared the stories of women who have been displaced by violence from the war in Colombia. They highlight the work of Franciscan Sisters who run a project called “Hope and Life,” which supports women by creating workshops that allow them to succeed in the textile industry. The organization also offers psychosocial support to women who have suffered the trauma of violence. [Find out more](#) about their work (in Spanish).

RESOURCES

Employment Opportunity

Book: *Constructing Immigrant “Illegality”: Critiques, Experiences, and Responses* (Cambridge University Press, 2013)

Constructing Immigrant “Illegality,” edited by Cecilia Menjivar and Daniel Kanstroom, is a collection of essays focusing on the term “illegality” in reference to immigration. “The authors conclude that the current concept of immigrant illegality is in need of sustained critique, as careful analysis will aid policy discussions and lead to more just solutions.” The book focuses on immigration in the United States. [Read more.](#)

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The Catholic Peacebuilding Network (CPN) is a voluntary network of practitioners, academics, clergy and laity from around the world which seeks to enhance the study and practice of Catholic peacebuilding, especially at the local level. The CPN aims to deepen bonds of solidarity among Catholic peacebuilders, share and analyze “best practices,” expand the peacebuilding capacity of the Church in areas of conflict, and encourage the further development of a theology of a just peace. While it is a

Catholic network, the CPN believes that authentic and effective Catholic peacebuilding involves dialogue and collaboration with those of other religious traditions and all those committed to building a more just and peaceful world.

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